

**Amazing Olney Heritage Trail – Roman villas, spark plugs for WW2 fighters, world class rugby players, leather and lace.....**

Olney has some fantastic heritage from making spark plugs for WW2 Spitfires and Lancaster's, lacey articles, an outpost for the Salvation Army, grace a little fallen, the penning of Amazing Grace "how sweet the sound...", civil war and Roman settlement.

The popularity of the social media channels from Olney in the Past, Cowper & Newton Museum & the new Olney History Hub, as well as a steady stream of enquiries from visitors, businesses, and residents, show that there is interest in finding out more about the history and heritage of Olney.

Currently the Olney Archaeology Society, Cowper & Newton Museum, Olney Circular Walk and Olney & District History Society are meeting virtually to draft out the contents of a project to make Olney's history and heritage more accessible and available to the Olney community. It also has the potential to encourage visitors to spend more dwell time and explore further the local shops, eateries and businesses.

The proposal is to have interpretation boards or town heritage panels at key locations. This trail will guide you around Olney, highlighting our wonderful town's heritage and open spaces with fascinating facts about people, places and the environment. This would be accompanied by a downloadable map/trail.

We are also hoping that you will be able to link to more heritage insights from your mobile devices via QR codes. There will also be a section for our younger "time travellers" and we are hoping local schools would like to partner to create e-treasure hunts around the town. Further projects could include a form of blue plaque similar to

other towns and London following consultation with the community and building owners.

Whilst the Societies and Museum do not have the funds to pay fully for this project, we are contributing financially towards it, as well as providing the time and expertise to engage with the local community and provide the historical information and background. In the New Year we will share more about the project in partnership with the Phonebox and through Social Media. Be ready to vote for your Top 10 sites, buildings, People & Stories and Events & Happenings.

Around £15,000 will be needed to cover the costs of the graphic work, the making of 6 – 8 high quality and long lasting interpretation panels and their installation. Additional funding is needed to make this project a reality and we are well aware that at the moment money is tight for so many people. However, the time feels right for Olney to come together around a project that shines a light and looks to the future. This is a project which can be achieved to the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses if we work together. We ask that Olney Town Council considers if this is a project they are interested in supporting.

**If anyone is interested in finding out more about donating, sponsoring or being involved in planning and implementation, they should contact Tom Jones (Olney Archaeology Society / Cowper & Newton Museum) , David Purvis (Three Hares Gallery Manager / Friend of Olney Lions) , Mike Neale (Olney & District History Society) Colin Rodden (OTC) by Facebook and Amanda Molcher (C&N Museum) at [admincnm@cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admincnm@cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk)**